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GENERAL

A/RES/53/199
22 February 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 12

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/53/605)*]

53/199. Proclamation of international years

The General Assembly,

Recalling its decision 35/424 of 5 December 1980 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 and 1998/1 of 6 February 1998,

Recalling also its resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996,

Reaffirming the importance of the guidelines for international years and anniversaries, adopted by the General Assembly in its decision 35/424, for the consideration of proposals for the proclamation of international years,

Recognizing the need to provide for effective arrangements for the proclamation of international years,

Decides that, starting from 1999, proposals for the proclamation of international years should be submitted directly to the Assembly for consideration and action, unless the Assembly decides to bring them to the attention of the Economic and Social Council for evaluation, in accordance with the provisions of the above-mentioned guidelines.

91st plenary meeting
15 December 1998

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A/RES/53/200
22 February 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 12

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/53/605)*]

53/200. Proclamation of 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/40 of 30 July 1998,

Proclaims 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism.

91st plenary meeting
15 December 1998

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A/RES/53/201
22 February 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 12

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/53/605)*]

53/201. Public administration and development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 50/225 of 19 April 1996 on public administration and development,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/225;[1]

2. *Endorses* Economic and Social Council decision 1998/220 of 23 July 1998, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to conduct a five-year assessment of the progress made in the implementation of resolution 50/225, and to report his findings to the Assembly through the Council in 2001.

91st plenary meeting
15 December 1998

[1] A/53/173–E/1998/87.

99-76951

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A/RES/53/202
12 February 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 30

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/53/L.73)*]

53/202. The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/12 B of 19 December 1997 and decision 52/477 D of 6 May 1998,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform,[1] and the note by the Secretary-General on a Millennium Assembly, the United Nations system (Special Commission) and a Millennium Forum,[2]

Convinced that the year 2000 constitutes a unique and symbolically compelling moment to articulate and affirm an animating vision for the United Nations in the new era,

Also convinced that a Millennium Assembly would provide an opportunity to strengthen the role of the United Nations in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century,

1. *Decides* to designate the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly "The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations";

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[1] A/51/950 and Add.1-7.

[2] A/52/850.

2. *Also decides* to convene, as an integral part of the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, a Millennium Summit of the United Nations for a limited number of days on dates to be decided by the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-third session;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States, members of the specialized agencies and observers and to propose, after a process of intergovernmental consultation, a number of forward-looking and widely relevant topics that could help to focus the Millennium Summit within the context of an overall theme, for consideration by the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-third session;

4. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to consult with non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, before the submission of his proposals;

5. *Decides* to continue its consideration of the item entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals", and agrees that a decision on the intergovernmental preparatory process, in particular its format and terms of reference, ensuring the full and effective participation of all Member States, members of the specialized agencies and observers in preparing for the Millennium Assembly, should be taken at the earliest opportunity by the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-third session;

6. *Also decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session a sub-item entitled "The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations" under the item entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals".

92nd plenary meeting
17 December 1998

A/RES/53/203 A-B

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A/RES/53/203 A-B
12 February 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda items 20 (*c*) and 45

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/53/L.66 and Add.1)*]

53/203. Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan and the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

A

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 49/140 of 20 December 1994, 50/88 B of 19 December 1995, 51/195 B of 17 December 1996 and 52/211 B of 19 December 1997,

Recalling also Security Council resolutions 1193 (1998) of 28 August 1998 and 1214 (1998) of 8 December 1998 and all statements of the President of the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan,

Noting all recent declarations by participants of regional international meetings and by international organizations on the situation in Afghanistan,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan, and respecting its multicultural, multi-ethnic and historical heritage,

Convinced that there is no military solution to the Afghan conflict and that only a political settlement aimed at the establishment of a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative government acceptable to the Afghan people can lead to peace and reconciliation,

Stressing the importance of non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and deeply concerned at all forms of continued external support, which is causing the prolongation and intensification of the conflict,

Expressing its grave concern at the failure of all Afghan parties, in particular the Taliban, to put an end to the conflict, which seriously threatens stability and peace in the region, and strongly condemning the sharp escalation of this conflict and the intensification of the fighting in Afghanistan, which add to the enormous suffering of the Afghan people, resulting in the massive loss of human life, refugee flows, killing, harassment, the forcible displacement of innocent civilians and extensive destruction, and seriously threaten stability and peace in the region,

Also expressing its grave concern at persistent violations of human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law in Afghanistan, as exemplified by reports of mass killings and atrocities committed by combatants against civilians and prisoners of war,

Further expressing its grave concern at the continuing and substantiated reports of systematic discrimination against girls and women, particularly in areas controlled by the Taliban,

Deeply concerned by the increasingly ethnic nature of the conflict, by reports of persecution on the grounds of ethnic origin and religious persuasion, in particular against the Shiites, and by the threat this poses to the unity of the Afghan State,

Strongly condemning the armed attacks against United Nations personnel in territories controlled by the Taliban, in which United Nations staff members were murdered or injured,

Also strongly condemning the capture by Taliban militia of the Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mazar-e Sharif and the killing of diplomatic and consular personnel of the Consulate-General and the correspondent of the Islamic Republic News Agency, and stressing that these unacceptable acts constitute violations of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations[1] and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations,[2]

Deeply disturbed by the continuing use of Afghan territory for the sheltering and training of terrorists as well as for the cultivation, production and trafficking of drugs, and by the dangerous repercussions of these activities, which reach Afghanistan's neighbours and far beyond,

Reiterating that the United Nations, as a universally recognized and impartial intermediary, must continue to play the central role in international efforts towards a peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict,

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 500, No. 7310.

[2] Ibid., vol. 596, No. 8638.

Expressing its appreciation for the efforts made in this regard by the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan and by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan,

Welcoming the contacts between the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan and various non-warring Afghan parties and personalities, and supporting calls by these independent Afghans for an end to the fighting and any proposals that might advance the cause of peace, including the convening of a genuine *loya jirgah* to promote a political settlement,

Expressing its appreciation for the commitment in support of and in coordination with the United Nations of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Afghanistan, especially the missions to Afghanistan undertaken jointly by the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference,

Welcoming the recent exchange of prisoners between the Afghan parties,

Recalling paragraph 13 of its resolution 52/211 B requesting the Secretary-General to continue to investigate fully reports about mass killings of prisoners of war and civilians and incidents of rape in Afghanistan and to include his findings in his next report to be submitted to the General Assembly,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General,[3] and endorses the observations and recommendations set out therein;

2. *Stresses* that the main responsibility for finding a political solution to the conflict lies with the Afghan parties, and urges all of them to respond to the repeated United Nations calls for peace;

3. *Calls upon* all Afghan parties to cease immediately all armed hostilities, to renounce the use of force and to engage, without delay or preconditions, in a political dialogue under United Nations auspices aimed at achieving a lasting political settlement of the conflict through creating a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative government, which would protect the rights of all Afghans and observe the international obligations of Afghanistan;

4. *Welcomes* the recent exchange of prisoners between the Afghan parties, and urges them to take further confidence-building measures;

5. *Urges* the Taliban and other Afghan parties to refrain from all acts of violence, especially against civilians;

6. *Condemns* the fact that foreign military support to the Afghan parties continued unabated through 1998, and calls upon all States strictly to refrain from any outside interference and immediately to end the supply of arms, ammunition, military equipment, training or any other military support to all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan, including the presence and involvement of any foreign military, paramilitary or secret service personnel;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to authorize the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, established under resolution 48/208 of 21 December 1993, to continue its efforts to facilitate an immediate

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[3] A/53/695–S/1998/1109; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-third Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1998*, document S/1998/1109.

and durable ceasefire among the Afghan parties and to institute a negotiating process leading to the formation of a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative government of national unity;

8. *Endorses* the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish, taking into account security conditions, a separate civil affairs unit by adding a new monitoring function to the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, with the primary objective of deterring grave violations of human rights and promoting respect for minimum humanitarian standards in the future, and to send an assessment mission to Afghanistan, as soon as security conditions permit, in order to determine the exact mandate, composition and location of the civilian monitors;

9. *Welcomes* the continuing commitment of the United Nations to facilitate the political process towards national reconciliation and a lasting political settlement with the participation of all parties to the conflict and all segments of Afghan society, and reaffirms its full support for the comprehensive efforts of the Secretary-General, the activities of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and those of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan;

10. *Welcomes* in this regard the constitution of groups of interested States, in particular the "six plus two" group, to coordinate their efforts, as well as the activities of international organizations, in particular the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the initiatives of its Secretary-General, and urges these States and organizations to continue to use their influence in a constructive manner in support of and in close coordination with the United Nations to promote peace in Afghanistan;

11. *Calls upon* the Taliban to provide security guarantees to enable an investigation to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the reports of massacres of innocent civilians and of mass executions of prisoners of war as well as on reports of killings in Mazar-e Sharif and Bamian;

12. *Urges* all Afghan parties, in particular the Taliban, to demonstrate their full commitment to the safety and security of all international and humanitarian personnel, which is a prerequisite for their activities in Afghanistan, to facilitate their work;

13. *Takes note* of the Supplementary Protocol to the Memorandum of Understanding of 13 May 1998, signed by the United Nations and the Taliban on the security of United Nations personnel in Afghanistan, and urges the Taliban to take the necessary steps for its full implementation;

14. *Urges* the Taliban to proceed with the immediate and thorough investigation of the death, serious injury or disappearance of international or national staff members and other persons employed by the United Nations, in particular the killing of the two Afghan staff members of the World Food Programme and of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Jalalabad and of the Military Adviser to the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan in Kabul, and to keep the United Nations regularly informed about the progress of its investigation;

15. *Strongly condemns* the killing of the diplomatic and consular staff of the Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mazar-e Sharif and the correspondent of the Islamic Republic News Agency, which the Taliban has accepted as having been perpetrated by its militia, urges the Taliban to inform the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations about the result of its investigation to date, and calls upon the Taliban to cooperate fully with an international investigation of

the murder of the Iranian diplomats and the Islamic Republic News Agency correspondent with a view to prosecuting the guilty parties;

16. *Urges* the Taliban and other Afghan parties to recognize, protect and promote all human rights and freedoms, including the right to life, liberty and security of persons, regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion;

17. *Calls upon* all parties, in particular the Taliban, to end discriminatory policies and to recognize, protect and promote the equal rights and dignity of men and women;

18. *Condemns* the continuing widespread violations of international humanitarian law in Afghanistan, and urgently calls upon all parties to respect strictly all its provisions that provide essential protection for the civilian population in armed conflicts;

19. *Demands* that all parties, in particular the Taliban, stop harbouring and permitting the training of terrorists and their organizations and that all Afghan parties cooperate with efforts to bring indicted terrorists to justice;

20. *Reiterates its call* to all Afghan parties, in particular the Taliban, to halt all illegal drug activities and to support international efforts to ban illicit drug production and trafficking;

21. *Reiterates* that the cultural and historic relics and monuments of Afghanistan belong to the common heritage of mankind, calls upon all Afghan parties, in particular the Taliban, to protect the cultural and historic relics and monuments of Afghanistan from acts of vandalism, damage and theft, and requests all Member States to take appropriate measures to prevent the looting of cultural artifacts and to ensure their return to Afghanistan;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly every three months during its fifty-third session on the progress of the United Nations Special Mission and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution;

23. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security".

93rd plenary meeting
18 December 1998

B

EMERGENCY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR PEACE, NORMALCY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-STRICKEN AFGHANISTAN

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 49/140 of 20 December 1994, 50/88 A of 19 December 1995, 51/195 A of 17 December 1996 and 52/211 A of 19 December 1997,

Expressing its grave concern about the continuation of the military confrontation in Afghanistan, threatening regional peace and security and causing massive loss of life and extensive human suffering, further destruction of property, serious damage to the economic and social infrastructure, refugee flows and other forcible displacements of large numbers of people,

Deeply disturbed by insufficient security conditions for United Nations personnel and other humanitarian personnel and by various restrictions of access imposed on them,

Deeply disturbed also by the closure of the Kabul offices of international non-governmental organizations, the expulsion of foreign workers and the arrest of local personnel, which have caused the non-governmental organizations to curtail their much-needed help to the civilian population of Kabul,

Remaining deeply concerned about the problem of millions of anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnance as well as the continued laying of new landmines in Afghanistan, which continue to prevent many Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons from returning to their villages and working in their fields,

Expressing its grave concern at the grave violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law in Afghanistan and at the inadequacy of measures taken by the warring factions to reverse the situation,

Deeply concerned by the continuing and substantiated reports of violations of human rights, in particular of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, and welcoming the decision of the United Nations to appoint gender and human rights advisers as an integral part of the office of the United Nations resident and humanitarian coordinator in Afghanistan,

Noting with deep concern the adverse effects of human rights violations on international relief and reconstruction programmes in Afghanistan as well as refugee repatriation programmes,

Expressing its grave concern for the well-being of internally displaced persons and the civilian population of Afghanistan without shelter, who face a long winter possibly deprived of basic foods, owing, *inter alia*, to the looting of United Nations premises and food supplies and to the denial by the warring factions of adequate conditions for the delivery of aid by humanitarian organizations,

Distressed by the loss of life caused by earthquakes and floods, and expressing its appreciation to all States, international agencies and non-governmental organizations that provided emergency relief,

Affirming the urgent need to continue, if conditions permit, international humanitarian assistance and action to assist Afghanistan in restoring basic services,

Welcoming the principle-centred approach towards humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation in Afghanistan as outlined in the Strategic Framework and in the document entitled "Next Steps for the United Nations in Afghanistan", and the common programming mechanisms introduced by the United Nations,

Expressing its gratitude to all Governments that have rendered assistance to Afghan refugees, in particular the Governments of Pakistan and of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and recognizing the need for

continuing international assistance for the maintenance abroad and the voluntary repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons,

Expressing its appreciation to all States, the United Nations system, international organizations and non-governmental organizations that have responded positively and continue to respond, where conditions permit, to the humanitarian needs of Afghanistan, as well as to the Secretary-General for his efforts in mobilizing and coordinating the delivery of appropriate humanitarian assistance,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General,[3] and endorses the observations contained therein;

2. *Calls upon* all relevant organizations of the United Nations to continue to coordinate closely their humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan on the basis of the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan, in particular to ensure a consistent approach on matters of principle, human rights and security, and appeals to donor countries as well as other humanitarian organizations to cooperate closely with the United Nations;

3. *Calls upon* the leaders of all Afghan parties to place the highest priority on national reconciliation, acknowledging the desire of the Afghan people for rehabilitation, reconstruction and economic and social development;

4. *Demands* that all Afghan parties respect international humanitarian law and that they, in particular the Taliban, ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of all humanitarian personnel and the protection of property of humanitarian organizations, including non-governmental organizations, and cooperate fully with the United Nations and associated bodies as well as with other humanitarian organizations and agencies in their efforts to respond to the humanitarian needs of the people of Afghanistan;

5. *Condemns* all blockades or other interference in the delivery of humanitarian relief supplies to the Afghan people as a violation of international humanitarian law, and notes the recent lifting of the blockade in central Afghanistan by the Taliban;

6. *Urges* all Afghan parties to ensure safe and unimpeded access for and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, in particular the supply of food, medicine, shelter and health care and to prevent the looting of United Nations premises and food supplies;

7. *Takes note* of the Supplementary Protocol to the Memorandum of Understanding of 13 May 1998, signed by the United Nations and the Taliban on the security of United Nations personnel in Afghanistan, and urges the Taliban to take the necessary steps for its full implementation;

8. *Denounces* the continuing discrimination against girls and women and religious minorities and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Afghanistan, while noting with deep concern their adverse effects on international relief and reconstruction programmes in Afghanistan, and calls upon all parties within Afghanistan to respect fully the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all, regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion, in accordance with international human rights instruments,

inter alia, the International Covenants on Human Rights[4] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;[5]

9. *Strongly urges* all of the Afghan parties to end discriminatory policies and to recognize, protect and promote the equal rights and dignity of women and men, including their rights to full and equal participation in the life of the country, freedom of movement, access to education and health facilities, employment outside the home, personal security and freedom from intimidation and harassment in particular with respect to the implications of discriminatory policies for the distribution of aid;

10. *Appeals* to all States and to the international community to ensure that all humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan integrates a gender perspective and that it actively attempts to promote the participation of both women and men, and that women benefit equally with men from such assistance;

11. *Expresses concern* over the continued laying of landmines and urges all Afghan parties to put a complete halt to the use of landmines, which continues to take a heavy toll on civilians and seriously impedes the delivery of humanitarian assistance;

12. *Urgently appeals* to all States, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to continue to provide, when conditions on the ground permit, all possible financial, technical and material assistance for the Afghan population and the voluntary, safe and secure return of refugees and internally displaced persons;

13. *Calls upon* the international community to respond to the inter-agency consolidated appeal for emergency humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance for Afghanistan to be launched by the Secretary-General for the period from 1 January to 31 December 1999, bearing in mind the availability also of the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a report on the actions taken pursuant to the present resolution;

15. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session, under the cluster of items on coordination of humanitarian assistance, the item entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan".

93rd plenary meeting
18 December 1993

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[4] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[5] Resolution 34/180, annex.

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A/RES/53/204
22 January 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 111

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/738)*]

53/204. Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

The General Assembly,

Having considered, for the period ended 31 December 1997, the financial reports and audited financial statements of the United Nations,[1] United Nations peacekeeping operations (for the period ended 30 June 1997),[2] the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO,[3] the United Nations University,[4] the United Nations Development Programme,[5] the United Nations Children's Fund, [6] the United Nations Relief and Works

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 5* (A/53/5), vol. I, chaps. I and V.

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 5* (A/52/5), vol. II, chaps. I and V.

[3] Ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 5* (A/53/5), vol. III, chap. IV.

[4] Ibid., vol. IV, chaps. I and V.

[5] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5A* (A/53/5/Add.1), chaps. I and IV.

[6] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5B* (A/53/5/Add.2), chaps. I and IV.

Agency for Palestine Refugees,[7] the United Nations Institute for Training and Research,[8] the voluntary funds administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,[9] the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme,[10] the United Nations Population Fund,[11] the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation,[12] the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme,[13] the United Nations Office for Project Services,[14] the reports and audit opinions of the Board of Auditors,[15] the concise summary of principal findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Board of Auditors[16] and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[17]

Taking note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the measures taken or to be taken to implement the current recommendations of the Board of Auditors,[18] and of the responses of the executive heads of the United Nations organizations and programmes to the recommendations of the Board,[19]

Commending the Board of Auditors for carrying out its reviews in a comprehensive and efficient manner, in line with regulation 12.5 of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations,

Expressing concern about the persistence of problems and defects in the financial administration and management of the United Nations observed by the Board of Auditors,

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[7] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5C* (A/53/5/Add.3), chaps. I, IV and V.

[8] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5D* (A/53/5/Add.4), chaps. I, IV and V.

[9] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5E* (A/53/5/Add.5), chaps. III and IV.

[10] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5F* (A/53/5/Add.6), chaps. I, IV and V.

[11] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5G* (A/53/5/Add.7), chaps. I, IV and V.

[12] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5H* (A/53/5/Add.8), chaps. I, IV and V.

[13] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5I* (A/53/5/Add.9), chaps. I, IV and V.

[14] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5J* (A/53/5/Add.10), chaps. I and IV.

[15] Ibid., *Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 5* (A/51/5), vol. I, chaps. II and III; ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 5* (A/52/5), vol. II, chaps. II and III; ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 5* (A/53/5), vol. III, chaps. I and II; and vol. IV, chaps. II and III; ibid., *Supplement No. 5A* (A/53/5/Add.1), chaps. II and III; ibid., *Supplement No. 5B* (A/53/5/Add.2), chaps. II and III; ibid., *Supplement No. 5C* (A/53/5/Add.3), chaps. II and III; ibid., *Supplement No. 5D* (A/53/5/Add.4), chaps. II and III; ibid., *Supplement No. 5E* (A/53/5/Add.5), chaps. I and II; ibid., *Supplement No. 5F* (A/53/5/Add.6), chaps. II and III; ibid., *Supplement No. 5G* (A/53/5/Add.7), chaps. II and III; ibid., *Supplement No. 5H* (A/53/5/Add.8), chaps. II and III; ibid., *Supplement No. 5I* (A/53/5/Add.9), chaps. II and III; and ibid., *Supplement No. 5J* (A/53/5/Add.10), chaps. II and III.

[16] See A/53/217.

[17] A/53/513.

[18] A/52/879 and A/53/335.

[19] A/53/335/Add.1.

Emphasizing the need to improve implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, as approved by the General Assembly,

1. *Accepts* the financial reports and audited financial statements and the reports and audit opinions of the Board of Auditors regarding the above-mentioned organizations, subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

2. *Also accepts* the concise summary of principal findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Board of Auditors, subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

3. *Notes with serious concern* that the Board of Auditors has qualified its audit opinion on the financial statements of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes mentioned in paragraph 3 above to take steps to rectify the situation in order to avoid another qualification during the next audit;

5. *Approves* all the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, and endorses the comments thereon contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[17] subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes to ensure timely implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 3 to 5 of its resolution 52/212 B of 31 March 1998;

7. *Decides* to consider specific issues, as appropriate, under the agenda item entitled "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors" at its resumed fifty-third session.

93rd plenary meeting
18 December 1998

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A/RES/53/205
2 February 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 112

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/521/Add.1)*]

53/205. Results-based budgeting

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/12 B of 19 December 1997 entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform",

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on results-based budgeting[1] and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2]

1. *Reaffirms* its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986;

2. *Reaffirms also* the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, in particular financial regulation 4.5;

3. *Reaffirms further* rule 153 of its rules of procedure;

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[1] A/53/500 and Add.1.

[2] A/53/655.

4. *Reaffirms* paragraph 21 of its resolution 51/221 B of 18 December 1996, in which it decided that no changes to the budget methodology, to established budgetary procedures and practices or to the financial regulations could be implemented without prior review and approval by the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in accordance with agreed budgetary procedures;

5. *Stresses* that any proposal to be considered by the General Assembly on results-based budgeting should:

(*a*) Address the needs and reflect the characteristics of the United Nations;

(*b*) Not be a budget-reduction exercise;

(*c*) Not be a staff-reduction exercise;

6. *Decides* that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 should be prepared and submitted for its consideration in accordance with existing budgetary procedures and processes;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee, the prototype fascicles, as recommended by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 4 of its report;[2]

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to it, for consideration at its fifty-fourth session, through the Advisory Committee, a comprehensive and analytical report on his proposal on results-based budgeting, which should include, *inter alia*, the following elements:

(*a*) A comparative study of present budgetary procedures and the proposed results-based budgeting, which should, *inter alia*, show very clearly the differences and similarities between the two systems;

(*b*) Justification for the proposed change from the present budgetary arrangements to results-based budgeting;

(*c*) Identification of weaknesses in present budgetary procedures and in the Administration that hinder implementation of those procedures;

(*d*) Identification of measures needed to improve current budgetary procedures;

(*e*) An indication of the regulations, procedures and information systems that should be in place if the proposal on results-based budgeting is approved by the General Assembly;

(*f*) Demonstration of the applicability of the concepts of results-based budgeting, including "expected results" and "performance indicators", to all sections of the programme budget of the United Nations;

(*g*) A sharper and clearer definition of the terms "objective", "output", "results", "performance indicator" and "performance measurement";

9. *Emphasizes* that Member States should continue to be fully involved, as at present, in the budgetary process, in accordance with existing United Nations regulations, rules and budgetary procedures;

10. *Decides* that, until the General Assembly decides otherwise, detailed information on post and non-post requirements should continue to be provided to the Assembly and the Advisory Committee to enable them to take appropriate and informed decisions on the budget proposals;

11. *Requests* the Joint Inspection Unit to undertake an analytical and comparative study of the experience of the bodies of the United Nations system that are implementing an approach similar to results-based budgeting and to submit its report no later than 31 August 1999;

12. *Requests* the Advisory Committee, when preparing its report on the proposed results-based budgeting, to take into account the report referred to in paragraph 11 above;

13. *Recognizes* the international, multilateral character of the Organization, and emphasizes that the quantitative results expected should not be the sole basis for the justification of resource requirements;

14. *Stresses* the role of Member States in carrying out a thorough analysis of resource allocation to all sections of the programme budget;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in the context of the above-mentioned comprehensive and analytical report, to take into account the provisions of the present resolution.

93rd plenary meeting
18 December 1998

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/53/206
5 February 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 112

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/521/Add.1)*]

53/206. Proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2000–2001

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986 in which it, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General to submit in off-budget years an outline of the proposed programme budget for the following biennium,

Reaffirming also section VI of its resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990,

Reaffirming further rule 153 of its rules of procedure,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2000–2001,[1] the related recommendations of the Committee for Programme

[1] A/53/220.

and Coordination[2] and the recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[3]

Having considered also the report of the Secretary-General on issues related to additional expenditures, including those relating to the maintenance of peace and security, inflation and currency fluctuation,[4] and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[5]

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination[6] and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;[3]

2. *Reaffirms* that the proposed programme budget outline shall contain an indication of the following:

(*a*) Preliminary estimate of resources to accommodate the proposed programme of activities during the biennium;

(*b*) Priorities reflecting general trends of a broad sectoral nature;

(*c*) Real growth, positive or negative, compared with the previous budget;

(*d*) The size of the contingency fund expressed as a percentage of the overall level of resources;

3. *Also reaffirms* that the outline should provide a greater level of predictability of resources required for the following biennium, promote greater involvement of Member States in the budgetary process and thereby facilitate the broadest possible agreement on the programme budget;

4. *Notes* that the budget outline is a preliminary estimate of resources;

5. *Reaffirms* that the budget proposals of the Secretary-General should reflect resource levels commensurate with mandates for their full, efficient and effective implementation;

6. *Emphasizes* the need for Member States to provide adequate resources for the full implementation of all mandated programmes and activities;

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[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/53/16), part two, para. 28.

[3] A/53/718 and Corr.1.

[4] A/C.5/51/57.

[5] A/52/7/Add.2. For the final text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7A.*

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/53/16).

7. *Decides* that the anticipated reduction of 19.8 million United States dollars related to compensating economies should not be included in the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2000–2001;

8. *Recognizes*, furthermore, that efforts to achieve efficient utilization of resources constitute an ongoing process and should not adversely affect the implementation of mandated programmes and activities;

9. *Endorses* the proposal of the Secretary-General in his report on additional expenditures,[7] and the related recommendations of the Advisory Committee in its report,[8] that provision should be made in the budget outline for expenditures for special political missions related to peace and security expected to be extended or approved in the course of the biennium;

10. *Decides* that the preliminary estimate of resources for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 should therefore include a provision for special political missions, in the amount of 86.2 million dollars at revised 1998–1999 rates, which should be reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, and that additional requirements shall continue to be treated in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213;

11. *Invites* the Secretary-General to prepare his proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 on the basis of a total preliminary estimate of 2,545 million dollars at revised 1998–1999 rates;

12. *Decides* that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 shall contain provisions for recosting on the basis of the existing methodology;

13. *Reiterates* that the priorities for the biennium 2000–2001 as determined by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/219 of 18 December 1996 are the following:

(*a*) Maintenance of international peace and security;

(*b*) Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions and recent United Nations conferences;

(*c*) Development of Africa;

(*d*) Promotion of human rights;

(*e*) Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts;

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[7] A/C.5/51/57, para. 6.

[8] A/52/7/Add.2, para. 7. For the final text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7A*.

(*f*) Promotion of justice and international law;

(*g*) Disarmament;

(*h*) Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations;

14. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to submit, in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the total amount of resources that he should have at his disposal, from all sources of financing, in order to implement fully all mandated programmes and activities;

15. *Decides* that the contingency fund shall be set at the level of 0.75 per cent of the preliminary estimate, namely at 19.1 million dollars, and that this amount is in addition to the overall level of the preliminary estimate and is to be used in accordance with the procedures for the use and operation of the contingency fund.

93rd plenary meeting
18 December 1998

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General Assembly

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A/RES/53/207
2 February 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 114

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/743)*]

53/207. Programme planning

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 37/234 of 21 December 1982, 38/227 A of 20 December 1983, 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 51/219 of 18 December 1996,

Having examined the proposed revisions submitted by the Secretary-General[1] concerning the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001,[2]

Having considered the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its thirty-eighth session,[3]

Having considered also the reports of the Secretary-General on the proposed revisions to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the

[1] A/53/6 (Progs. 1-3, 5-8, 13/Rev.1, 14-18, 20, 23 and Corr.1, 24 and Corr.1 and 26-28).

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 6* and corrigendum (A/51/6/Rev.1 and Corr.1).

[3] Ibid. *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/53/16).

Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation,[4] priority-setting within the medium-term plan[5] and the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1996–1997,[6] as well as the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives,[7]

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its thirty-eighth session;[3]

2. *Notes* the appreciable efforts made at the thirty-eighth session of the Committee to improve the working methods and procedures of the Committee within the framework of its mandate;

3. *Reaffirms* the role of the Committee as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for planning, programming and coordination;

4. *Takes note* of the conclusions and recommendations contained in part one, chapter V, of the report of the Committee on the work of its thirty-eighth session, and looks forward to their implementation;

I

MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1998–2001

1. *Reaffirms* regulation 4.2 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure full compliance with this regulation;

2. *Adopts* the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 submitted by the Secretary-General,[1] as amended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination;[8]

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of the consultative process with Member States;

4. *Also emphasizes* the importance of the contribution of the sectoral, regional and central intergovernmental bodies, in particular the Main Committees of the General Assembly, in reviewing and improving the quality of the medium-term plan and its revisions;

5. *Regrets* that revisions to some programmes of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 were not reviewed by the relevant intergovernmental bodies;

6. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to take all appropriate measures, including ad hoc measures, and to submit proposals, through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, to the General

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[4] A/53/133.

[5] A/53/134.

[6] A/53/122 and Add.1.

[7] A/53/90.

[8] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/53/16), part one, chap. II.B, and part two, chap. III.A.

Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, so as to enable the Main Committees of the General Assembly, as well as the sectoral, functional and regional bodies, effectively to review the relevant portions of the medium-term plan or its revisions, with a view to facilitating their consideration by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Fifth Committee;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a preliminary report, in accordance with the existing mandates of the General Assembly, on possible arrangements for post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, as well as on the transition from relief to development, maintaining the distinct nature of both activities, for consideration by the relevant Main Committees of the Assembly and intergovernmental bodies;

II

PRIORITIES

1. *Stresses* the importance of priority-setting as an integral part of the planning, programming and budgeting process;

2. *Decides* that priorities shall continue to be established in the medium-term plan, which is the principal policy directive of the United Nations, and shall guide the allocation of resources in subsequent programme budgets through the mechanisms provided for in General Assembly resolution 41/213;

3. *Decides also* that priorities contained in the budget outline shall be in conformity with the priorities in the medium-term plan;

4. *Emphasizes* that priorities, once established by the General Assembly, cannot be changed or altered unless it so decides;

III

REGULATIONS AND RULES GOVERNING PROGRAMME PLANNING, THE PROGRAMME ASPECTS OF THE BUDGET, THE MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. *Approves* the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination[9] on the revisions to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to prepare revisions to the relevant rules and to bring them to the attention of the General Assembly through the Committee before promulgation;[10]

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[9] Ibid., part two, para. 52.

[10] Ibid., para. 53.

IV

NEW NARRATIVES OF THE PROGRAMME BUDGET

Approves the new programme narratives for section 7A, Economic and social affairs[11] and section 26, Public information,[12] subject to the modifications recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination[13] and also to the provisions of the present resolution;

V

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1996-1997[6] and the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination thereon, subject to the provisions below;

2. *Notes with concern* the late submission of the programme performance report, and urges the Secretary-General to submit the report in future to all Member States by the end of the first quarter following completion of the biennial budget period, in accordance with regulation 6.3 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation;

3. *Recalls* section II, paragraph 13, of its resolution 50/214 of 23 December 1995, in which it decided to keep the vacancy rate at 6.4 per cent during the biennium 1996-1997, and in this context expresses its deep concern at the high vacancy rate and its adverse impact in some areas of programme delivery;

4. *Reaffirms* that the vacancy rate is a tool for budgetary calculations and should not be used to achieve budgetary savings;

5. *Deeply regrets* the use of vacant posts for consultancies and short-term appointments during the biennium 1996-1997;

6. *Notes with appreciation* that the United Nations, in particular the regional commissions, provided development-related advisory and technical support to Member States during the biennium 1996-1997, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to extend such services during the current biennium, in accordance with existing mandates;

7. *Reaffirms* the right of Member States to seek the support and assistance of the United Nations, individually and collectively, in the regional and subregional context, in their efforts to promote developmental activities;

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[11] E/AC.51/1998/6 (Sect. 7A) and Corr.1.

[12] E/AC.51/1998/6 (Sect. 26).

[13] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/53/16), part one, paras. 192 and 208.

8. *Emphasizes* the need for greater interaction between the regional commissions and the respective regional organizations;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the regional commissions provide technical assistance to Member States, including through their respective regional organizations;

10. *Notes* the efforts made to improve the quality of the programme performance report and to review performance within the context of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, and stresses that in future reports more emphasis should be placed upon qualitative analysis to reflect achievements in implementing programme activities;

11. *Reaffirms* regulation 4.1 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, and reiterates that resources should be utilized strictly for the purposes approved by the General Assembly;

12. *Notes with concern* that some of the findings contained in the programme performance report for the biennium 1996–1997 are ambiguous and contradictory and that therefore some of the conclusions remain vague and general in nature;

13. *Also notes with concern* that the programme performance report for the biennium 1996–1997, in some instances, commented on actions which did not conform with the resolutions of the General Assembly;

14. *Further notes with concern* that some resources were redeployed to fund activities that had not been approved in the programme budget for the biennium 1996–1997, while a number of mandated programmes and activities, particularly in priority areas, were postponed, curtailed or cancelled;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in the light of paragraph 57 of the programme performance report for the biennium 1996–1997,[14] to report with clear evidence on the impact of the reform of the Organization and restructuring of the Secretariat on programme delivery during the biennium 1998–1999 in the context of the report on the programme performance of the United Nations for that biennium;

16. *Notes* the finding in the programme performance report for the biennium 1996–1997 that programme managers, in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly and the relevant regulations and rules, have managed to minimize the adverse effect of financial constraints and achieved high rates of implementation in some areas;

17. *Recognizes* the need for effective systems at the intergovernmental and departmental levels to ensure that activities correspond to the mandates reflected in the medium-term plan and programme budgets, as well as the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of performance;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit proposals for consideration by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-ninth session on ways in which the full implementation and the quality of mandated programmes and activities could be ensured and could be better assessed by and reported to Member States;

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[14] A/53/122.

19. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to convey the reasons for the further postponement of the delivery of outputs to the biennium 1998–1999 and the opinion of relevant intergovernmental bodies on the proposal by the Secretary-General to delete fifty-seven outputs carried over from the biennium 1994–1995, for consideration at its current session;

20. *Notes* that the proposals requested in paragraph 50 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997 have not been submitted, and, in this context, reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to enhance the role and participation of all relevant departments, in particular the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, in the preparation of future programme performance reports;

VI

EVALUATION

1. *Stresses* the importance and necessity of further improving evaluation and integrating it into the cycle of programme planning, budgeting and monitoring with a view to improving and strengthening programme formulation and implementation;

2. *Also stresses* that the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation provide a sound basis for effective monitoring and evaluation if implemented in all parts of the Organization;

3. *Approves* the addition of the programmes on policy coordination and sustainable development and on population to the schedule of in-depth evaluations to be submitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-first session;

4. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee[15] on the in-depth evaluations of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme and on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-fifth session on the start-up phase of the evaluation of peacekeeping operations;[16]

5. *Decides* to forward to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-fifth session on the evaluation of the programme on environment;[17]

6. *Emphasizes* that guidelines on programme monitoring and evaluation should be in conformity with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation;

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[15] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/53/16), part one, paras. 225-230, 239-241 and 250-253.

[16] E/AC.51/1998/2 and Corr.1, E/AC.51/1998/3 and E/AC.51/1998/4 and Corr.1.

[17] E/AC.51/1998/5 and Corr.1.

VII

OTHER CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION

Endorses the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination[18] regarding the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1997,[19] the progress reports on implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001,[20] and on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.[21]

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[18] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/53/16), part one, paras. 285-288, 301-310 and 323-333.

[19] E/1998/21.

[20] E/CN.6/1998/3.

[21] E/AC.51/1998/7.

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General Assembly

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A/RES/53/208
14 January 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 117

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/744)*]

53/208. Pattern of conferences

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolutions 40/243 of 18 December 1985, 43/222 B of 21 December 1988, 47/202 A of 22 December 1992, 48/222 A of 23 December 1993, 49/221 A of 23 December 1994, 50/206 A of 23 December 1995 and 51/211 A of 18 December 1996 and section A of resolution 52/214 of 22 December 1997, and its decision 52/468 of 31 March 1998,

Reaffirming the mandate of the Committee on Conferences,

Having considered the report of the Committee on Conferences,[1]

1. *Takes note with concern* of the observations of the Committee on Conferences in paragraph 135 of its report, and encourages members to participate in the work of the Committee;

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 32* and corrigendum (A/53/32 and Corr.1).

2. *Invites* the Committee on Conferences to consider the question of the participation of observers in the work of the Committee in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure of the General Assembly;

3. *Notes with appreciation* the work of the Committee on Conferences, and takes note of its report;

4. *Approves* the draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1999 as submitted by the Committee on Conferences,[2] subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

5. *Authorizes* the Committee on Conferences to make adjustments to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1999 that may become necessary as a result of actions and decisions taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide all the conference services required as a result of decisions taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, taking into account, as necessary, the procedures established by the Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987;

7. *Reaffirms* its decision that the headquarters rule shall be adhered to by all bodies;

8. *Decides* that waivers to the headquarters rule shall be granted solely on the basis of the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations recommended by the Committee on Conferences for adoption by the General Assembly;

9. *Invites* all its subsidiary bodies that are authorized to meet away from their established headquarters to keep under review the exception to the headquarters rule in the light of their current work situation and to report any changes to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences;

10. *Notes with appreciation* that the Secretariat took into account the arrangements referred to in paragraphs 5 and 6 of section A of General Assembly resolution 52/214 and that the two holidays of Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha, which occur in 1999 on 18 January and 29 March, respectively, shall be observed as official holidays of the United Nations, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure strict implementation of those arrangements when preparing all future draft calendars of conferences and meetings of the Organization;

11. *Decides* that United Nations bodies should be invited to avoid holding meetings on 9 April 1999 and that this arrangement should be taken into account when drafting future calendars of conferences and meetings;

12. *Requests* the Committee on Conferences to consider, at its next session, the proposal that United Nations bodies should avoid holding meetings on lunar New Year's Day;

13. *Emphasizes* that, when planning the calendar of conferences and meetings, every effort should be made to avoid simultaneous peak periods at the various duty stations, and requests the Secretariat, when drafting future calendars of conferences and meetings, to merge into one section the draft list of meetings

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[2] Ibid., annex.

of treaty bodies established under the auspices of the United Nations and the draft calendar of conferences and meetings of the principal organs of the specialized agencies;

14. *Also emphasizes* the importance of providing adequate conference-servicing resources to all United Nations conference centres;

15. *Notes with appreciation* that the overall utilization factor for 1997 exceeded the benchmark of 80 per cent, in particular at Geneva and Vienna;

16. *Notes* the efforts by the Secretary-General to improve utilization rates of the conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi for 1996 and 1997;

17. *Expresses concern* that the conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi are still underutilized, as recorded during the period 1996–1997;

18. *Reiterates its call* for better utilization of the conference facilities at Nairobi;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in view of the fact that the United Nations Office at Nairobi has been upgraded to a full-fledged United Nations centre, to explore the possibility of establishing a permanent interpretation service at the centre and to submit a comprehensive report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session;

20. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, without prejudice to the practices currently used to meet interpretation requirements, to examine the provision of interpretation services to other locations from permanent interpretation structures based in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, taking into account the request contained in paragraph 19 above for the establishment of a permanent interpretation service at Nairobi;

21. *Invites* all subsidiary bodies of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Commission on Human Settlements and encourages Member States, intergovernmental bodies and regional and other major groupings to consider increasing their use of the conference facilities at Nairobi;

22. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to assist the aforementioned bodies in improving this situation, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, through the Committee on Conferences, on the actions taken to this end;

23. *Reiterates its request* to the Committee on Conferences to continue to consult with those bodies that consistently utilized less than the applicable benchmark figure of their allocated resources for the past three sessions, with a view to making appropriate recommendations in order to achieve the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources;

24. *Requests* that the Chairperson of the Committee on Conferences transmit a letter to the chairpersons of all bodies that utilized less than the applicable benchmark figure (80 per cent) of their allocated conference resources in the previous year, informing them of the problem and drawing their attention to the significant loss of meeting time, with a view to encouraging appropriate action on their part so as to improve the utilization of conference resources;

25. *Notes* the importance of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States for the smooth functioning of sessional bodies, in view of the increased requests for meetings of regional and other major groups, and welcomes the fact that 81 per cent of the requests for such meetings were met;

26. *Notes with concern* the difficulties experienced by some Member States owing to the lack of conference services for some meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States;

27. *Regrets* that 19 per cent of the requests for interpretation services made by regional and other major groupings of Member States were not met, while recognizing that meetings of Charter and mandated bodies must be serviced as a priority;

28. *Decides* to include all necessary resources in the budget for the next biennium to provide interpretation services for meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States upon request by those groupings, on an ad hoc basis, in accordance with established practice, and requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, through the Committee on Conferences, a report on the implementation of this decision;

29. *Urges* intergovernmental bodies to spare no effort at the planning stage to take into account meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States, to make provision for such meetings in their programmes of work and to notify the conference services, well in advance, of any cancellations so that unutilized conference-servicing resources may, to the extent possible, be reassigned to meetings of regional and other major groupings of States;

30. *Deeply regrets* that the reports requested in paragraphs 9 and 15 of section A of its resolution 52/214 were not submitted to the General Assembly, and notes, in this context, that those reports were presented only in an oral form to the Committee on Conferences;

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit the reports requested in paragraphs 9 and 15 of section A of its resolution 52/214 before 31 March 1999, and decides, without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 8 (*a*) of its resolution 50/206 C of 23 December 1995, that an oral report cannot substitute for a report requested by the General Assembly;

32. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the use of remote interpretation and translation will not affect the quality of interpretation and translation and will not in itself lead to a reduction of language posts;

33. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, through the Committee on Conferences and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, a report on possible measures to alleviate the excessive vacancy rates in language services at some duty stations and ensure the required quality of conference services Secretariat-wide;

34. *Requests* the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts aimed at filling vacancies in language services at all duty stations;

35. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, when filling the posts of translators and interpreters, irrespective of the proposed contractual status of candidates, to take duly into account their professional qualifications, including pre-job training and experience, in order to maintain at all times the highest possible

quality in the interpretation and translation services, and to ensure the equal treatment of language units of the Secretariat;

36. *Stresses* that the quality of interpretation in the six official languages should be improved in accordance with its resolution 52/214, and decides that the standards that govern the staffing of the interpretation booths shall continue to be observed;

37. *Welcomes* the new organizational structure of conference services, which will allow for more effective coordination among the four United Nations conference-servicing centres in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, and requests the Secretary-General to review the administrative instruction of 8 May 1987[3] on guidelines for the preparation of host Government agreements falling under General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985 so as to reflect the new organizational structure.

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18 December 1998

B

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 47/202 B of 22 December 1992, 48/222 B of 23 December 1993, 49/221 B of 23 December 1994, 50/206 B and C of 23 December 1995, 51/211 B of 18 December 1996 and 51/211 F of 15 September 1997 and section B of its resolution 52/214 of 22 December 1997,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General[4] and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[5] on translation issues,

1. *Expresses deep concern* about deficiencies in the quality of some reports and documents originating in the Secretariat, and requests the Secretariat to take all necessary measures to address the situation and to develop measurements to evaluate improvements made in the quality of reports and documents;

2. *Notes with deep concern* the low rate of compliance with the six-week rule for the issuance of documentation;

3. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to ensure that documentation is available in accordance with the six-week rule for the distribution of documents simultaneously in the six official languages of the General Assembly;

4. *Requests* the Secretariat to carry out a study on the possible relationship between the late issuance of documentation and the low utilization of conference services by some bodies;

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[3] ST/AI/342.

[4] A/53/221.

[5] See A/53/507.

5. *Regrets* that there continue to be delays in the submission of documents to the conference services, expresses concern that most of the delay in the issuance of a document is due to the late submission of documents from the substantive departments, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that substantive departments prepare their programme of work to meet the deadline for the issuance of documents;

6. *Reaffirms* its decision that, if a report is issued late, the reasons for the delay should be indicated when the report is introduced;

7. *Regrets* that its decision taken in paragraph 5 of its resolution 50/206 C has not been implemented;

8. *Decides* that if a report is submitted late to the conference services, the reasons for this should be included in a footnote to the document;

9. *Endorses* the request of the Committee on Conferences to the Secretariat that a report containing detailed data on the reasons for delays in the issuance of documentation and an analysis of the additional costs incurred by document-processing services and of other financial implications of the late submission and issuance of documents be presented to the Committee at its 1999 substantive session;

10. *Notes with concern* that the provisions of paragraphs 24 and 25 of section B of its resolution 52/214 are not always being implemented, despite reiteration of these provisions in its decision 52/471 of 31 March 1998;

11. *Reiterates its request* that the Secretary-General direct all departments to include, where appropriate, the following elements in reports originating in the Secretariat:

(*a*) A summary of the report;

(*b*) Consolidated conclusions, recommendations and other proposed actions;

(*c*) Relevant background information;

12. *Reiterates* that all documents submitted to legislative organs by the Secretariat and expert bodies for consideration and action should have conclusions and recommendations in bold print;

13. *Stresses once again* that press releases should reflect accurately the statements of Member States as delivered in their original languages;

14. *Notes with concern* that the provisions of paragraphs 1.21 and 1.22 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001[6] are not being implemented, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services of the Secretariat conducts consultations and coordinates the assignment of responsibilities for the implementation of all General Assembly resolutions and decisions and follows up to ensure timely action by relevant departments and bodies;

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[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 6* and corrigendum (A/51/6/Rev.1 and Corr.1).

15. *Stresses once again* the need for compliance with existing page limits, and invites all intergovernmental bodies to consider, where appropriate, the possibility of further reducing the length of their reports from thirty-two to twenty pages without adversely affecting either the quality of presentation or the content of the reports;

16. *Calls upon* the Secretariat to make its procedures for obtaining waivers to the sixteen-page rule more rigorous, while maintaining, however, the necessary degree of flexibility, with a view to encouraging author departments to reduce the length of their submissions while maintaining high standards of quality;

17. *Requests* the Secretariat to submit to the Committee on Conferences, every two years, updated information on the number and length of documents;

18. *Also requests* the Secretariat to continue consultations with the secretariats of intergovernmental bodies with a view to informing them on the speedy issuance of unedited verbatim transcripts and the cost savings derived therefrom, and encouraging them to follow the example of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in carrying out the experiment with unedited verbatim transcripts, so as to enable the Committee on Conferences to make final recommendations on the matter;

19. *Emphasizes* that the choice of unedited verbatim transcripts should be consistent with the needs of the bodies concerned;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to improve the quality of the translation of documents into the six official languages in a timely manner;

21. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that summary and verbatim records are issued in all six official languages concurrently;

22. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts, where appropriate, to introduce new technologies such as machine-assisted translation and common terminology databases while ensuring that there are no adverse effects on the quality of documentation and translation;

23. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts made by the Secretariat to address the concerns expressed by delegations on translation-related matters, and encourages the Secretariat to continue its efforts to improve quality and proficiency in all six translation services;

24. *Takes note with appreciation* of the decision by the Secretariat to reduce the utilization of self-revision to the recommended level so as to ensure the desired quality of parliamentary texts, and emphasizes that the measures taken in relation to the revision of job descriptions, the training of staff, peer review and spot checks and other related initiatives should be continued;

25. *Expresses concern* over continued high rates of self-revision during peak workload periods and occasional inadequate translations, which have sometimes hampered the work of delegations, and emphasizes the importance of continuous training for all translators at all duty stations and of developing measures to provide translators with increased support from submitting offices and secretariats;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the post of reviser is provided in the six official languages in accordance with paragraph 19 of section B of its resolution 52/214 and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session;

27. *Stresses* that the United Nations should maintain a permanent interpretation and translation system capable of responding to its average workloads;

28. *Encourages* the Secretariat to continue its efforts to ensure effective linguistic quality control through to the final stage of document production and distribution and to report to the Committee on Conferences on the steps taken in that regard;

29. *Regrets* the difficulties being faced by language service staff in relation to their career development;

30. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session analysing such problems as may exist related to career development in language services and taking into account the fact that the numbers and grade levels of staff should be commensurate with the needs of the Organization as well as the fact that requirements differ between languages as well as between duty stations;

31. *Recommends* that due account should be taken of returns in terms of, *inter alia*, possible savings and efficiency gains in planning new technology;

32. *Also recommends* that computer-assisted translation systems should be compatible with the existing computer platforms used in the United Nations, that they should be upgradable to future technological developments such as speech recognition and remote access, and that the experience of all duty stations should be taken into account in their development;

33. *Takes note* of paragraph 62 of the report of the Committee on Conferences;[1]

34. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on the impact of economy measures on the delivery of mandated conference services;

35. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, when preparing budget proposals for conference services, to ensure that all necessary resources are proposed for such services, giving priority to redressing the inadequacies in the provision of conference services in the most efficient manner for continuous improvements in the quality and delivery of those services;

36. *Decides* to defer until its resumed fifty-third session consideration of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit,[7] the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments thereon,[8] the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination[9] and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[10] on United Nations publications.

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[7] See A/51/946.

[8] A/52/685.

[9] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/53/16), part one, chap. IV.

[10] A/53/669.

C

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 50/206 D of 23 December 1995, 51/211 C of 18 December 1996 and 51/211 F of 15 September 1997 and section C of its resolution 52/214 of 22 December 1997,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General[11] and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[5] on access to the optical disk system,

Stressing the importance of equal access to, and benefit from, the optical disk system and other new technologies in all six official languages for all Member States and the need to overcome the difficulties faced by some Member States, in particular by developing countries, in acquiring the technology to access the optical disk system, as well as other available technologies,

Appreciating the actions taken by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics of the Economic and Social Council to achieve universal connectivity between United Nations databases and those of Member States, including through their permanent missions, and the training programmes initiated to that end,

Appreciating also the efforts of the Secretary-General to incorporate new information technologies in the work of the Organization,

1. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Secretariat to improve access to the optical disk system, particularly the establishment of additional centres for the optical disk system;

2. *Recognizes* the efforts to provide wider access to the optical disk system, while continuing to ensure the availability of hard copies of documents for Member States, in particular for developing countries;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that all resolutions and decisions, and any annexes thereto, adopted by the principal organs of the United Nations are posted to the optical disk system expeditiously;

4. *Notes with appreciation* that the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat launched United Nations Web sites in Russian, Arabic and Chinese this year;

5. *Stresses* the need for the continuous development, maintenance and enrichment of United Nations Web sites, with a view to achieving equal treatment of the six official languages on those Web sites;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit proposals in this connection to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session through the Committee on Conferences and the Committee on Information;

7. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to ensure that the texts of all new public documents, in all six official languages, and information materials of the United Nations are made available through the United Nations Web site daily and are accessible to Member States without delay;

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[11] A/52/803.

8. *Notes* that, in addition to the free-of-charge connection, via the Internet, of all permanent and observer missions, requests have been received by the Organization for access to the optical disk system from a number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

9. *Reaffirms* that, as provided for in its resolution 51/211 F, access to the optical disk system will continue to be provided free of charge to permanent and observer missions and other government offices of Member States, with a maximum of ten access passwords for each Member State, and that the optical disk system will continue to be made available to all staff of the Secretariat;

10. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in paragraph 13 of its report[5] that a way be found, while maintaining the quality of service and priority given by the General Assembly to the users mentioned in paragraph 1 of its resolution 51/211 F, to apply income generated through optical disk system subscriptions directly to help to meet the cost of maintaining and/or expanding the optical disk system, and to establish a mechanism to monitor satisfaction with the optical disk system.

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D

The General Assembly,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General[12] and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[5] on the cost-accounting system for conference services,

Stressing the need to provide Member States and United Nations bodies with more comprehensive and accurate information on the costs of meetings and documentation,

1. *Emphasizes* the need for the Secretariat to take into consideration the experience of all duty stations when improvements were made in existing information systems;

2. *Endorses* the view expressed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in paragraph 10 of its report[5] that the report of the Secretary-General does not provide sufficient information at this stage to allow the General Assembly to endorse the full-fledged development of a cost-accounting system;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at the earliest opportunity, taking into account the observations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in paragraph 10 of its report.

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[12] A/52/1000.

E

The General Assembly,

Recalling its decision 38/401 of 23 September 1983 and section E of its resolution 52/214 of 22 December 1997 concerning the prohibition of smoking in small conference rooms and the discouragement of smoking in large conference rooms,

1. *Calls upon* representatives of Member States to abide by its decision 38/401 and section E of its resolution 52/214;

2. *Encourages* all users of United Nations conference facilities, in order to avoid involuntary exposure to passive smoking, to refrain from smoking, in particular in conference rooms.

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